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# FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

NEWFOUNDLAND

# BOARD OF TRADE

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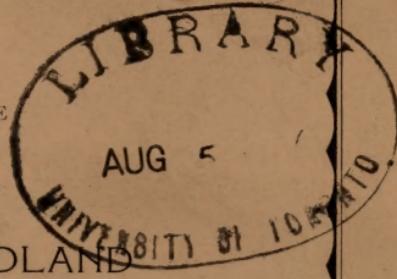
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SINCE the annual meeting last January the Council has held fifty weekly and five special meetings, at which many important matters have been discussed. Only one quarterly meeting of the Board was held during the year owing to the difficulty of getting a quorum during the summer and the busy season in the Fall. A Special Meeting of the Board was held for the purpose of amending and adding to the By-Laws dealing with the payment of subscriptions; also with the form of election by nomination and ballot by which all the members of the Board could record their vote for the respective candidates for office.

### **Finance.**

At the close of 1912 there was a deficit in the accounts of the Board of \$628:83; this, with the interest, was paid by the members who had guaranteed any deficit which might occur during the first three years of the Board's existence.

During the past year as it appeared that there would be a deficit, donations were asked for from friends of the Board, who generously responded. The receipts from all sources amount to \$3,843:14, disbursements during the year \$3,716:83, leaving a balance of \$126:61; there were, however, at the close of the year, sundry unpaid bills amounting to about \$360:00, and subscriptions, etc., owing

to the Board, and donations unpaid, sufficient to balance the accounts ; one of the causes of the deficit was the decrease in inspection fees, which amounted to \$392:28 less than last year.

**Subjects Discussed during the year 1913.**

The following list of matters which were dealt with by the Council at their weekly meetings, will give members of the Board an idea of the work of the Council :

Inferior Pack of Lobsters,  
Pilfering during Transportation.  
Public Enquiries,  
Common Carriers Freight Embargo,  
Bait Act : Herring Sold at Halifax to French Trawlers,  
Tariff Changes,  
Movements of Steamers (Coastal),  
Weights and Measures,  
Fishery Board,  
Fish Inspection,  
Cold Storage,  
Amalgamation Importers' Association,  
Consular Service,  
Imperial Transport Conference,  
Empire Day Holiday,  
Bait Protection Service,  
Extradition Treaty with Brazil,  
Herring Inspection,  
Newfoundland Directory,  
Municipal Matters.  
Thanksgiving Day,  
Health of the City (Smallpox),  
Coal (J. P. Howley's Lecture),

Argentine Representation : Letter from Mr.  
W. Mahoney.  
Telephone Service,  
Bait Act Resolution,  
Wireless Telegraphy on Vessels,  
Fish Contract for Italy,  
Hotel,  
Shore Fish Shipped as Labrador,  
Over-crowding on Railway Cars,  
Lobster Cans,  
Common Carriers (Circular sent to all Importers  
on Pilfering),  
British Empire Trade Marks,  
Labrador Boundary,  
Standardizing of Cull of Fish,  
Fish Exports—Under-valuation of,  
Absentee Landlords,  
Portuguese Tariff,  
Amendments to By-laws,  
Motor Engine Resolution,  
Common Carriers Freights,  
Daylight Saving Bill,  
National Exhibition at Christiana, Norway.

#### **Membership.**

A special endeavour was made by the Council to increase the membership of the Board, with the result that fifty-three new members have been enrolled. It is essential that the roll of members shall number at least 400. The Board should not be dependent upon the generosity of the larger mercantile firms, and the Council calls upon all members of the Board to interest themselves in obtaining new members. The work of the Council is much ham-

pered by want of funds, but apart from the financial aspect of the case, it is very much to be desired that the Board should comprise all sections of the trade and commerce of the country. The influence of the Board will be very much increased with an increased membership, and the varied trade interests will no doubt find their advantage in working together under the aegis of the Board of Trade. The Council trusts that members will invariably combat the idea that the Board exists for any one particular section of the business community. It is intended for all.

#### **Standardization of the Cull of Fish.**

It was with considerable pleasure that the Council of the Board of Trade noted at the last General Election that both political parties expressed their intention of dealing with the important matter of standardizing the cull of fish. When the Board of Trade was founded five years ago, this was the chief matter which occupied the attention of the organizing committee, and in the Act of Incorporation submitted to the Government of the day, powers were asked for, which if granted, would have enabled the Board of Trade to establish a desirable method for the buying and selling of fish. In the meantime it has become a much more difficult matter, because now it may be truthfully said that there is no cull of fish to be standardized, all fish being bought talqual.

It was the belief of the organizing committee that the Board of Trade would comprise representatives of all classes—fishermen, tradesmen and labourers, as well as the commercial classes, and that a fair and unvarying practice in the purchase and sale of our commodity could be arrived at by mutual consent, and maintained by the

authority of the Board under the Act of Incorporation. But as the Board was refused the power to deal with the question, it has been able to do very little to check the tendency of the present methods of buying and selling to cause a steady deterioration in the cure of our great staple.

The Board has therefore devoted its attention to the establishment of standards of codfish for export to the different markets, as being the next best thing to having standards for local transactions. For instance, five years ago there was no standard for cask fish on the Spanish markets, and if a merchant in Spain purchased 100 casks of codfish from a merchant in St. John's, he received whatever it was convenient to ship. By dint of persistent effort, a well defined standard now exists which is conformed to, not only by the exporters who make use of the Board of Trade's inspection, but also by those who do not avail themselves of it. Unfortunately, the good effect which the exporting merchants may have derived from having a recognized standard article which they could sell for cash, has been minimised by the practice which has again become general of sending large consignments to market for sale. It is true that a considerable proportion of these consignments are made to trusted agents who are maintained in the Mediterranean markets to safeguard the interests of our exporters, but it is none the less a fact that the practice has caused the markets to be in a steadily overstocked condition, and has largely put a stop to outright sales to foreign merchants.

#### Cure of Codfish.

Owing to the fine weather which we have enjoyed during the past season, there was a considerable improvement

in the average quality of the codfish brought to St. John's. Still there was often a great difference in the quality of different lots on the market at the same time, selling at the same price, which unfair system would be remedied if all fish were culled and sold according to quality.

### **Markets.**

The markets have on the whole been good, and exporters have received fair returns for their shipments. The prices paid locally have seldom if ever been exceeded, and the catch seems to be about an average; therefore it may be said that the codfishery has been very profitable.

It is a deplorable matter that at the end of the season it has to be said that "the catch *seems* to be about an average." It should be a matter of knowledge and not speculation, and neither merchants nor fishermen will be able to make the most of the voyage until accurate information as to the catch is obtained.

### **New Markets.**

A great deal has been written and said of late years about new markets. One would suppose that it was possible to discover on the world's surface some nation or people who would immediately become large consumers of our product, if we could introduce it to them. Now it is quite possible that with the opening of new trade routes, such as the Panama Canal, new markets may be reached, and in the course of years a good trade become established. But there is a matter of far greater importance about which less is said, and that is the conservation of the old markets. We do not by any means sell all the fish we ought to in either Spain, Portugal, Italy, or

other Mediterranean markets. We sell very little comparatively to Porto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Cuba; and even our best market (Brazil) buys a good deal from other countries. Our principal competitor (Norway) is making great endeavours to supplant us in the Mediterranean markets, and in some places we have lost considerable ground. It behoves us to watch this situation very closely, but as a matter of fact very little attention is paid to it.

In a general way we know that we supply about two-thirds of the codfish imported into the Brazils, and less than half of that of Spain. These two markets therefore could take about half a million quintals more fish from us, if we can beat our competitors in quality and price.

The surest and quickest way to gain new markets, or to keep the old ones, is to make good, clean, wholesome fish.

In regard to the price of codfish, it is observable that a very erroneous idea prevails as to the causes which govern its rise and fall. The idea seems to be that the price is arbitrarily fixed by the local merchant. It is of course true that the buyer, no matter who he is, nor what he buys, tries to buy cheaply; and the seller, on the other hand, tries to get as much as possible for his goods. But this daily or hourly struggle has very little ultimate effect upon the price of merchandize, and it would be well if our fishermen were to realize that the price of codfish, on the whole, depends upon a variety of things, over which neither the merchant nor the fisherman has any control.

The condition of the foreign markets finally makes the price. And these markets are affected by the following circumstances, in addition to the size of our own catch:

- The catch in Norway and Iceland, and the local supply of fresh fish;
- The supply of other cheap food;
- The purchasing power of the consumer, depending again upon the prosperity of his own industry;
- The condition of the world's money markets.

#### **Brazils.**

The Brazilian market has been specially good, having taken 239,284 quintals during the six months from June 30th to December 31st, as against 205,947 quintals for the same period last year.

#### **Sales of Codfish to United States.**

A most interesting and important feature has been the increase in sales of green fish to the United States. From figures furnished the Board of Trade, it appears that about 84,000 quintals of green fish have been shipped during the past six months, as against 26,000 quintals last year. The price obtained has been in the neighbourhood of 3½ cents per pound, so that there has been realized from this source no less a sum than \$305,000:00. Three and a quarter cents "green" may be said to equal \$7:50 per quintal talqual "dry," so that the business is evidently a highly profitable one. There can be no doubt that there is every prospect of increasing our sales to the United States to an enormous extent. Not only is the business good in itself, but it so reduces the quantity of Bank fish to be marketed in Europe, that the returns from that quarter should also be more remunerative.

The shipments to Oporto for the past six months have been 118,405 quintals, as compared with 132,704 quintals

the previous year: thus for the fourth consecutive year marking a decrease in our shipments to that market.

Up to the present time, no information has been received as to the result of the representations made by the Board of Trade, through His Excellency the Governor in Council, relative to the discrimination in duty against British fish entering Portugal. The difference in duty is about thirty-seven cents per quintal. The Council has also enlisted the help of Boards of Trade in Canada on this matter, so that with the additional influence of the Dominion Government, it is hoped that the differential duty may be removed.

#### **Labrador Fishery.**

The Labrador Fishery has unhappily been short. The exact shortage however is not known, as in spite of persistent efforts by the Assistant Collector on behalf of the Board of Trade, the reports of vessels returning from Labrador have been most incomplete. Eight hundred and eighty-three vessels cleared for Labrador, but only 320 were reported on their return. It is therefore impossible to review this portion of our fisheries with any degree of correctness, or to say whether it has been a paying business or not. The Export from the Coast was 111,876 quintals as against 194,995 quintals the previous year. Prices obtained in the foreign markets have, so far, been much higher than last year, but as the price paid on the Coast was \$4.80 against \$3.50 the previous year, it is doubtful if Exporters have obtained their own money back again.

On an average of years, the sale of Codfish shipped from the Coast has been unremunerative to Exporters. To this | ✓

fact must be principally ascribed the marked decline in the outfit for this fishery. The figures are as follows :—

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Vessels.</i>	<i>Persons.</i>
1905	1,077	14,229
1906	1,260	16,550
1907	1,419	16,697
1908	1,432	17,796
1909	1,203	14,988
1910	1,126	12,050
1911	914	9,798
1912	827	9,335
1913	883	9,212

It must be noted that these figures are evidently not correct. They are compiled at the Customs from Returns of Vessels surveyed, but no reports are received from some places known to fit out quite a number of vessels. Also quite a number of vessels finally go to the Labrador Coast which were originally intended only for the French Shore.

There is still however evidence of a considerable decline, which is reflected in the depopulation of some of the Conception Bay towns. It is therefore a very serious matter deserving of most careful investigation.

It is confidently believed that the fisheries on the Labrador Coast are capable of enormous extension if pursued on the lines of the Bank fishery, which has been thoroughly proven by the success of the Banking fleet fishing off the Coast in recent years. The chief reason, perhaps, why this method of fishing has not been actively pursued, is that hitherto the fish could not have been sold to advantage after it was caught. But with the opening of the

United States market, the thought arises that possibly arrangements might be made to ship it there. It must be borne in mind, however, that trap fish, which is usually small, is unsuitable, and only Large and Medium fish, such as is caught on trawls by Bankers, can be sent to the United States markets.

Connected with the problem of Trawl Fishing off the Labrador Coast is the question of a Bait supply, which does not however seem to be an unsurmountable difficulty.

The Council takes this opportunity of again suggesting to the Government the necessity of enforcing the entering at the Customs of all vessels returning from Labrador, as well as the clearances for that fishery.

The Norwegian fishery for the past season was 76,000,-000, as compared with 99,200,000 in 1912; a decrease of 23,200,000.

The total export of codfish for the past six months ending December 31st, 1913, is 928,413 quintals, including Labrador shipments from the coast, as against 971,392 quintals for the corresponding six months of 1912; a decrease of 42,979 quintals.

The Bank fishery the past season shows a decrease of 3,143 quintals as compared with 1912, but only 104 vessels and 1,830 men were engaged at this fishery as against 124 vessels and 2,065 men in 1912. The average catch per man this season is 83 quintals, as against 75 $\frac{1}{4}$  in 1912.

The Seal Fishery of last Spring was an average one, the season's catch amounting to 272,065 seals as compared with 175,130 in 1812, an increase of 97,935.

The returns of the Salmon fishery shows a decrease of 1,590 cases packed the past season; although there was an increase of 22 licenses issued and 108 more nets used than last year.

#### **Whale Fishery.**

This fishery again shows a marked decline, and apparently will soon be a thing of the past. The catch for the past three years is as follows:

1911	...	...	...	335	whales
1912	...	...	...	294	"
1913	...	...	...	201	"

#### **Lobsters.**

There has been a serious decrease in the catch of lobsters during the past season.

In 1912 ...	...	26,148	cases were packed
1913 ...	...	16,565	" "
<hr/>			9,583 cases decrease.

The price however naturally advanced, and somewhat compensated for this shortage.

The reason of the short catch is attributed to some extent to very rough weather during the season, entailing great loss of traps and gear. However, it should be noted that the catch is steadily declining, in spite of the increased inducement of higher prices. It is evident some measures of protecting this valuable industry ought to be devised, and strictly enforced.

The annual pack of lobsters for the last thirteen years is as follows:

			<i>Current Price</i>
1900 ...	Packed	37,523 cases ...	\$12:00
1901 ...	"	36,271 " ...	12:25
1902 ...	"	38,638 " ...	11:00
1903 ...	"	31,881 " ...	12:75
1904 ...	"	43,552 " ...	13:50
1905 ...	"	31,228 " ...	11:50
1906 ...	"	26,999 " ...	12:50
1907 ...	"	25,540 " ...	14:00
1908 ...	"	27,222 " ...	13:00
1909 ...	"	22,654 " ...	12:50
1910 ...	"	24,601 " ...	15:00
1911 ...	"	28,644 " ...	17:00
1912 ...	"	26,148 " ...	18:00
1913 ...	"	16,565 " ...	22:00

#### Transportation.

Numerous complaints have been received by the Council from time to time re the pilfering, loss or destruction of articles on their way to this country in steamers; the delay of freight at North Sydney which has come over the Intercolonial Railway for delivery in this country, the congestion of freight at the various steamship and railway termini, and the inadequate facilities for handling freight at the coastal premises. From the nature of these complaints it became apparent that the whole question of the transportation of freight to and from this country, and in the country, required careful examination.

For this purpose a committee called the Traffic Committee was appointed to consider the subject and make recommendations to the Council.

The Traffic Committee for the purpose of an intelligent enquiry considered the subject under the following heads:

1. The liability of common carriers by sea, both foreign and coastwise.
2. Delays in transportation of goods from North Sydney.
3. The congestion of freight at the various steamship termini and at the railway terminus in St. John's.
4. Additional facilities at coastal premises at St. John's.

**Dealing with Item 1: The Liability of Common Carriers by Sea, both Foreign and Coastwise.**

The committee reported as follows:—

Your committee have had under consideration two matters of importance to the trade of this Colony.

The *first* referred to complaints of a character all too common with reference to the pilfering, loss or destruction of articles on their way to this country in steamers, in the country, and on railways.

The *second* referred to the delay of freight at North Sydney which had come over the Intercolonial Railway for delivery in this country.

These subjects give rise to two questions: (1) What is the legal position of common carriers by land and by sea? (2) What is the special position of the Reid Nfld. Co. as to its steamers and railway under the statute law of this Colony?

General shippers are common carriers, and the responsibility of a railway company and an express company is

that of a common carrier. By the law of England a common carrier is, generally speaking, liable for all loss not occasioned by the act of God or the public enemy, and is part of the common law of this colony.

In the absence of statutory prohibition, common carriers of all sorts may limit their liability by special agreement. In England the only prohibition as to limitation refers to railway shipping bills, and is that they shall be reasonable within the opinion of any court in which they come to be construed. In this country limitation as to responsibility in case of carriage by railway and coastal steamers connected therewith may possibly be affected to some degree by the general statute concerning railways, and the railway contract (1898) as amended.

There is not in England, and there is not here, any limitation by statute to the conditions concerning liability for damage which carriers by sea may impose by their bills of lading, etc.

In 1910 "The Water Carriage of Goods Act" was enacted in Canada. The bill of lading used by the Black Diamond Line is framed under this Act (also by the Furness Line, and the Red Cross Line from Halifax). Briefly, its effect is to provide that liability for damage or loss preventable by care, diligence and honesty on the part of master and crew shall not be avoided by special provisions in shipping bills, etc.

In some of the United States, carriers are expressly prohibited from limiting, by contract, their liability as common carriers, but we cannot find that any of the Eastern sea-board States which deal with this country prohibit limitations.

In the United States generally, even in those which allow limitations to be contracted for, it is held that carriers cannot, by contract, be relieved from responsibility for loss or damage caused by negligence or pilfering.

A different conclusion has been reached by the courts of New York State, which hold that contracts exempting carriers from liability will be sustained.

An agreement limiting liability, made in a State where such a limitation is legal, is upheld as binding, even when construed in the courts of States in which such limitations cannot legally be made.

A contract for limitation of liability is construed in accordance with the law of the place where it is made. For instance, if a law were made in this colony against limitation of liability by special contract, it would not be held even in our local courts to apply to contracts made abroad for shipment of goods to this country.

Upon inquiry we find that all the steamship lines trading to and from this country require shippers of goods to enter into special contracts for transportation. By the provisions adopted in all of them, with the exceptions noted above, the steamship lines seem to be excepted from responsibility for every peril conceivable by the mind of man, and to fulfil their only actual obligation by presenting a bill for the freight. For instance, "the shipowner is not liable for any damage or loss which is *capable* of being covered by insurance," "nor for any claim of which notice is not given before the removal of the goods," "nor for pilferage whether in the service or not, etc., etc."

Two methods by which the Legislature of this colony could prevent unreasonable contracts of exemption from liability concerning goods imported into the colony have been suggested; the first is that subsidy shall be withheld from steamship lines unwilling to agree to the use of a reasonable form of bill of lading for goods carried in the trade of this colony; the second is that general steamers not under subsidy shall be prohibited from trading, as common carriers, to and from the colony, unless and until a reasonable form of bill of lading has been agreed upon. If they refused to trade upon such conditions, a small subsidy

would doubtless procure the establishment of lines willing to make them.

A local statute, similar to that of Canada, (mentioned above) would be valuable in reference to shipments from this country.

The conditions as to liability for goods carried by railway in this colony, and by coastal steamers under subsidy, should be regulated by statute.

**Item No. 2: Delay in Transportation of Goods  
from North Sydney.**

The committee reported as follows :

Your committee is convinced that the delay of goods on the I. C. R. at North Sydney is due to the refusal or neglect of the Reid Nfld. Co. to accept the goods at that point. It is probable that this refusal or neglect is due in the main to the fact that the Newfoundland Railway has not sufficient rolling stock. It is true that the amount of goods at North Sydney destined for this colony has been abnormally large this season ; but importation from Canada is growing, and direct trade from Canada to the cutports of the colony over the railway seems likely to increase rapidly hereafter, so that what is abnormal now will soon be normal. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the conditions affecting transportation between North Sydney and Port aux Basques shall be grappled with.

For delay at North Sydney, the I. C. R. is not liable either in fact or law. The fact is as stated, that the delay there is due to the refusal of the Reid Nfld. Co. to accept, and the legal responsibility of the I. C. R. is discharged when it brings the goods to that point.

In carrying between North Sydney and Port aux Basques, the Reid Nfld. Co. acts as a common carrier.

Common carriers undertake to furnish transportation only so far as their facilities will permit; they are not bound to furnish increased facilities. For refusal to accept goods at North Sydney, the Reid Nfld. Co. is liable if at all, except in the case of special contracts made here, solely to the law of Canada, in which the breach occurs.

In the Railway Contract, 1898, provision was made for one steamer to ply between North Sydney and Port aux Basques. No special provisions were made as to freight. The position is, therefore, that as to the carriage of freight between these points, the Reid Nfld. Co. may impose such conditions as it pleases.

The carriage of freight over the railway system of the colony, and by the Reid coastal boats, is in part at least subject to statute law.

Chapter 32 of the Consolidated Statutes (1892), entitled "Of Railways and Railway Companies," bears on the matter.

By the Reid Railway Contract, 1898, it is provided that the contractor shall sufficiently and continuously operate as many through freight trains as the demands of traffic may require (sec. 4), except when prevented by causes over which the contractor has no control (sec. 3), and the contractor shall furnish additional rolling stock, etc., and in such quantity, and of such description, as the developing and increasing business of the railway may require; so that the traffic requirements of the country may be fully met (sec. 8). The charges for transportation are governed by contract.

By the Railway Amendment Act, 1901, it is provided that the sum of \$250,000 shall be held by the Government as security for the due and faithful performance of the Railway Contract by the contractor (sec. 28), but this security is only available in an action by the Government for breach of contract in operating the road, and not for

any loss by private individuals. There is no provision in the contract or the statute law of the colony for any tribunal other than the Supreme Court to try disputed questions between the contractor and the Government, or between the contractor and private individuals.

The methods of the Supreme Court, especially in view of the right to appeal to the Privy Council, practically prohibit litigation to protect private rights.

It is apparent that Legislation is necessary in relation to acceptance and carriage of goods by the Reid Nfld. Co's steamers plying between North Sydney and Port aux Basque, and carried on the railway and its branches.

But the real need of the colony is such a tribunal as the United States and Canada have found it necessary to create under various names. The Legislation suggested will be helpful, but despite the best of laws, daily difficulties will occur in connection with the increasing transportation problems of the country, and a strong tribunal with summary powers is the only palliative which other countries have evolved with any degree of satisfaction.

The Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada has jurisdiction over railways in the Dominion, and regulates freight and passenger rates, speed, equipment, rolling stock, etc. It holds enquiries, summons witnesses, and, in fact, exercises a very powerful and beneficial authority over all questions under its jurisdiction, and the very highest satisfaction has been given to Canada by the Board, and it is looked upon as the most valuable tribunal in practical affairs that the Dominion possesses. The conditions which should be permitted in railway bills of lading have been before this Board. It has no control over bills of lading for carriage by sea.

To the formation of such a body for this colony, it will be objected that (1), there is not enough work for it to do; and (2), the cost would be too much for the results likely

to be achieved. As to cost, undoubtedly the right man for chief commissioner could not be got except for a salary which would seem large, for such a man could earn a large sum in his ordinary occupations, and there would be other expenses, but compared with the importance of the interests affected, and the almost daily loss incurred in the trade of the colony by preventable losses, no expense which would be incurred in operating this tribunal should cause hesitation. As to work, the questions almost daily arising in the transportation of passengers and goods, and as to rolling stock, track, stations, operation and other matters relative to the railway would be at once numerous, difficult and important. Such a board might have authority also over coastal steamers, cable, telegraph and telephone companies, street railways, and electric, gas, mining and industrial companies, especially in relation to preservation of life and limb.

Opposition might develop to the creation of such a Board; on the part of the Government, because of the difficulty of obtaining necessary legislation, and the pressure of supporters opposed to it, and on the part of contractors and others thinking it inimical to their special interests. But, on the other hand, it would relieve the Government of the difficulty of solving the ever-increasing questions which cause public dissatisfaction, and contractors and others who are desirous only of having a square deal with the public might see in this proposal a way out of troubles which have caused them loss and worry.

But there cannot be any doubt that the people at large, and the commercial body especially, are vitally interested in the solution of the difficulties that are now experienced, and that threaten to continue and increase. What the public needs and demands it can have, if its demand is insistent enough. We are persuaded that no temporizing measures will be worth attempting. A clear, bold policy of reform should be adopted and followed up.

For the reasons given, to which many will be added by your own consideration, we beg to make the following recommendations :

(1) That the Legislature should be asked to enact a law limiting the extent by which carriers may vary their common law liability by special provisions in bills of lading or shipping receipts concerning—

- (a) Exports from the colony ;
- (b) Coastwise and Labrador trade ;
- (c) Carriage by subsidized steamers from external ports ;
- (d) Railway goods traffic (including parcels by express).

(2) That legislation should be procured regulating the obligations of the Reid Nfld. Co. as to accepting and forwarding goods at and from the terminus of the I. C. R. in Cape Breton to points in this colony, and over the railway system of the colony.

(3) That the Board of Trade should appoint a special committee to consider the appointment and constitution of a Board of Public Utilities on the lines suggested above, and the precise form which the legislation recommended as to the carriage of goods should take ; and that such special committee should be instructed to consult with the Goverment of the colony relative to these matters, and to report progress from time to time.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Delay in the transportation of goods arriving by the Intercolonial Railway for furtherance to Newfoundland, has usually taken place during the early spring and late fall at Sydney.

This past season the delay has occurred at Port aux Basques, and owing to the lack of sheds for storing goods, large quantities of freight, principally flour, have been placed out in the open alongside the track, with inadequate protection from the weather.

The result has been, in addition to the delay, goods have arrived to consignees in a more or less damaged condition.

The advantage of a permanent commission, such as suggested, to deal with the conditions shown is quite apparent.

**Item No. 3: The Congestion of Freight at Steamship and Railway Terminus.**

The committee on enquiry found this condition resulted from two main causes: the delay in consignees removing their goods promptly: inadequate warehousing facilities. The committee reported as follows:

We recommend that the Government of the colony be asked,—

- (a) To procure the enactment of an amendment to Section 19 of the Customs Act, 1898;
- (b) That adequate warehouse room be procured by building, or otherwise acquiring suitable places.

At present, under the Customs Act, consignees are allowed ten days after a steamer is reported, during which they may pay duty and remove their goods.

The amendment suggested was that this time be reduced to five days, and that after that date the agent of the carrier may make complaint on oath to the collector that the goods are causing inconvenience, or are likely to cause

inconvenience, if either be the case, and that no physical cause prevents its removal, or renders it unduly difficult or expensive, and thereupon the collector shall cause the said goods to be conveyed to and stored in a place appointed for the purpose.

It will readily be seen that to carry this proposal into effect adequate warehouses are necessary, and the building or procuring of same was recommended.

The full text of the suggested amendment and regulations are in the hands of the Secretary, and may be seen by any member of the Board, or copies will be provided on application.

**Item No. 4: Additional Facilities at Coastal Premises  
at St. John's.**

The committee found that they had no means of prosecuting such enquiry as was necessary to make recommendations, and reported that this was a subject for the proposed commission.

These reports were adopted by the Council, and as a result on April 1st, 1913, the following communication was addressed to the Prime Minister, Sir Edward Morris, and presented by a deputation from the Council who waited upon him, and who were very courteously received.

[COPY]

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND,  
APRIL 1ST, 1913.

The Right Hon. Sir E. P. MORRIS, K. C. M. G.,  
Prime Minister, St. John's.

SIR,—

The Council of the Board of Trade has had under consideration for some time past various questions of import-

ance to the general trade of the colony, and has authorised this deputation to bring before the Government certain points in relation to which legislation and executive action seem advisable.

The subjects upon which we desire to address you to-day are as follows:—

- (1) Facilities for the more expeditious handling of goods arriving at this point by steamboats from foreign ports.
- (2) The liability of common carriers by sea, both foreign and coastwise.
- (3) Provisions for the acceptance and carriage of goods at and from North Sydney for points within the colony.

Taking up these points in their order we respectfully represent—

(1) That section 19 of the Customs Act, 1898, should be amended in conformity with the draft we now present, and with regulations thereunder such as we also now place before you. The effect will be to induce importers to move their goods from sufferance warehouses more rapidly than at present, thus enabling more expeditious and convenient handling of imports.

The Council are of opinion that one large centrally situated warehouse, or two or three smaller warehouses, should be built or acquired in this port, and placed under the sole control of the Customs, and they are convinced that if a fair charge be imposed on goods warehoused, an adequate financial return on the investment can be obtained, while the advantage to trade will be great.

(2) There is much variety in the conditions of bills of lading in use in this colony. Of course, legislation here cannot affect the conditions of bills of lading for goods inwards, but these are already the subject of legislation in

the United States and Canada ; but exports and coastwise trade is also affected, and could be legislated for. We suggest that the Canadian law at present in force could be followed with advantage.

(3) Existing statutes affect the carriage of goods by railway in this colony, but they do not extend to goods at Cape Breton ports intended for railway transportation in this Colony. There is need of legislation governing the duty of accepting and conveying such goods from such ports. The Reid Newfoundland Company's boats plying between Port aux Basque and Cape Breton, receiving subsidies, and constituting an integral part of the railway system of the colony, should have extended to them the obligations and restrictions which apply to the railway itself, in so far as the carriage of goods is concerned.

Yours truly,

(Sgd). W. G. GOSLING,  
President Newfoundland Board of Trade.

At the time this deputation waited on the Prime Minister, it was recognized that the then session of the Legislature was too far advanced to expect immediate action to be taken. The Council now consider that having satisfied themselves that the reforms asked for are necessary and right, this Board of Trade as representing the commercial interests of the colony, should urge upon the Government the need for granting, at the earliest opportunity, the necessary legislation to effect the desired reforms.

#### **Municipal Affairs.**

As another Municipal election is due to take place next June, the Council felt that it was time to make a move for the more efficient administration of the city's affairs. After laying the matter before certain members of the

Board, it was decided to call a meeting of citizens to consider the matter. A meeting was therefore held on December 29th, which was attended by about 150 interested and prominent citizens. After a number of gentlemen had expressed their opinions in favor of some action being taken, a resolution was passed resolving the meeting into a Citizens' Committee for civic reform. Since then a working committee of twenty-five has been selected, and sub-committees appointed to make investigations into the various details of civic work. It is firmly hoped that the work thus begun will be continued until the city is made clean and wholesome. But to achieve this result, it will be necessary for the citizens to support the movement in every way possible.

The action of the Board of Trade in instigating this movement has been criticized, but it is the opinion of the Council that one of the chief functions of the Board of Trade is to inaugurate actions of this kind, it being the only institution in the city whose scope is wide enough to do so, without the charge of partizanship being made, either for one cause or another. Besides, it is obviously good business to have a clean and wholesome city.

#### **Weights and Measures.**

The Council is informed, that the recommendations made to the Government last winter for alterations in the Weights and Measures' Act will be brought before Parliament at the present Session.

#### **Daylight Saving Bill.**

An effort is being made to introduce the Daylight Saving Bill into Newfoundland. The scheme is simply the mov-

ing of the hands of the clock forward one hour in June, and backward one hour in September.

The Council has pleasure in endorsing the proposal, and believe if the bill is passed it will act to the general benefit of the whole community.

#### **Telephones.**

Periodically for several years past the Council has been compelled regretfully to record the fact that nothing had yet been done to improve the Telephone service in the city, or to establish a Long Distance Telephone system for the Outports. Once more the Council can only express the resigned and pious wish that the installation of this service should no longer be delayed.

The Council hereby begs leave to suggest to the Government that the diplomatic reply to their representations that "the matter was under consideration," has outworn its usefulness.

#### **Local News.**

An endeavour has been made to obtain prompt information of all matters of interest, and members are asked to assist by telephoning to the Secretary any information which may come to their knowledge likely to be of general interest.

The Council regrets again to have to note that the rooms are not made use of to any great extent by members as a daily rendezvous at mid-day. Some fifteen or twenty men invariably assemble here to their mutual benefit, and if members generally would follow their example, the advantage to all would be very great. The loss of time

resulting from the necessity of calling at the offices of business friends, which would thus be obviated, would compensate many times over for the half hour spent daily at the Board of Trade rooms.

#### **Labrador Survey.**

It is a matter of great regret to the Council to find that nothing was done during the past year towards the Survey of the Labrador Coast.

When the Imperial Government withdrew H. M. Survey Ship *Elinor* from Newfoundland waters, (the survey of the same having been completed), the Council of the Board of Trade urged upon the Government the necessity of an equally thorough survey for the Coast of Labrador, including the Banks and possible fishing grounds off the shore.

The increase of shipping to the Coast and along the Coast, the possible erection of Pulp Mills on the Labrador, or the utilization of the pulp wood in some other way, the projected short line routes and railway extension, all demand that the Coast should be surveyed. But before and beyond all this, there is to be considered the safety of our fishing vessels, and the extension of our fisheries. In 1912 the Council represented to the Government that the survey could be made at a far less annual expense than that incurred by H. M. S. *Elinor*, and that the Imperial Government and the Dominion of Canada were also interested in the matter, and probably would share in the cost. The Council was given to understand that negotiations had been begun with a view to the undertaking of this very important work, and trusts that the coming summer will find the survey well underway.

**Labrador Boundary.**

The attention of the Government has been called to the continual assumption by the Canadian Press, that the whole of the Labrador Peninsula belongs to Canada, Newfoundland's share being apparently, like Euclid's definition of a line, "length without breadth."

It appears to the Council that it is not advisable to let the people of Canada become so persuaded, and therefore urges that Newfoundland's claim to the whole eastern water-shed of Labrador should be affirmed in unmistakable manner.

The importance of the matter is evident when it is realized that most of the pulp wood on the Labrador is on the territory in question.

**Motor Boats.**

In view of the great increase of Motor Boats for fishing purposes the Council passed the following Resolution, which has been forwarded to the Government :—

*Whereas,—In the opinion of the Council of the Board of Trade it is desirable to increase the manufactures of the Colony as far as possible ;*

*And whereas,—At the present time there are a large number of imported Motor Engines used in the fisheries of the Colony, and many more are to be imported during this year ;*

*And whereas,—The said Motor Engines are admitted duty free, which of course include both material and labor ;*

*Be it Resolved,—*That the Governor in Council be requested to consider the advisability of placing all material used in the construction of Motor Engines on the free list, so as to encourage the establishment of factories here for the manufacture and repair of Marine Motor Engines.

It is pleasing to be able to report that the year 1913 was undoubtedly a very prosperous one. The local factories were kept busy throughout the year. The value of the output of the pulp mills on the Exploits increased by \$800,000, and the export of iron ore from Bell Island was greater than the previous year by 281,935 tons.

The increase in these industries, together with the successful fisheries and high prices, makes a very prosperous condition for the Colony. It is probable that, in the history of the Colony, the fishing and labouring classes were never so well off as at the present time, and that commercial credit was never before at so high a standard.









